

Utility Board
October 23, 2006
Milton, Florida

The Santa Rosa County Utility Board met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Mark Glasgow, Vice Chairman Michael Handler, and members Jimmy Kimbrough and Tim Bryant. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker) and County Engineer (Roger Blaylock). Chairman Glasgow called the meeting to order at 5:05p.m.

Bryant moved approval of the minutes from the February 27, 2006 meeting; Handler seconded, and the vote carried unanimously. (4-0)

Handler requested receipt of the minutes in a shorter duration while the meeting is still fresh on the members' minds. Walker said the Utility Board Committee has not met on a regular basis. He said staff will make a commitment to meet more regularly.

Discussion of Fire Hydrant Maintenance Services

Walker said county staff has reviewed the maintenance responsibilities for the fire hydrants within Santa Rosa County. He said the Fire Departments are responsible for fighting fires, and the water companies are responsible for supplying water.

Blaylock said the Task Force requested the county go out for proposals for fire hydrant maintenance. He said fire hydrant maintenance, operation, and connections are all regulated by the utilities per state statute. Blaylock said water companies are the entity responsible for maintaining fire hydrants connected to their systems. Blaylock said several of the utilities have responded to the fire hydrant maintenance proposal, and they are not interested in piggybacking on this effort. He said staff's recommendation will be for the county to contact all of the utility companies to see if they are interested in contracting through a maintenance company to test and maintain the hydrants within their system. Blaylock said the two vendors that submitted proposals will be contacted to make sure the prices are still good.

Blaylock said as Executive Director of Navarre Beach, he is not interested in a hydrant maintenance contract. He said Navarre Beach has a program in place to service and test fire hydrants on the beach. Blaylock said this effort is in conjunction with Navarre Beach Fire Department. He said he is very confident with the current program this utility company has in place.

Ted Dotson with Pace Water System said Pace Fire Department is taking care of testing and painting the fire hydrants connected to Pace Water System. He said the fire department and water company are splitting the expense of the maintenance work crew. Dotson said Pace Water System is not interested in the maintenance bid. He said he felt the maintenance bid was too high. Glasgow agreed. Walker said staff will contact the utilities to find out what is currently being done regarding fire hydrant maintenance.

Ray Harper with Berrydale Water System said their Board of Directors voted to take care of fire hydrant maintenance in house. He said Berrydale Water System has 52 fire hydrants and a maintenance program is planned. Harper said they also felt the bid was high and are not interested.

Michael Handler said it is better when the utilities do the inspections. He said the utility companies know where everything is located. Handler said the utility company is not 100% certain everything will be checked when a third party does the inspections. He asked if the county has imposed any uniformity of inspections upon the utilities to make certain all the utility companies are doing full inspections. Blaylock said AWWA (American Water Works Association) has a document that identifies the minimum obligations required of the water purveyors.

Walker said staff will provide additional information on where the utilities are with hydrant maintenance. Blaylock said staff will also contact the vendors to find out if the bids will stay the same with fewer maintained hydrants. Bryant asked if any of the utility companies are in favor of an outside vendor. Blaylock said the utilities were considering an outside vendor until the bids were received. He said the bids are higher than the utilities expected. Bernard Roll with Sundial Utilities said he felt most utilities take care of their own fire hydrants. He asked why the county has requested bids for maintenance. Walker said there have been concerns regarding maintenance of fire hydrants varying from utility to utility. He said these concerns were whether the fire departments or the utility companies have the responsibility. Roll said the utility companies have requested increases to cover expenses, and the owners of the franchise should take care of maintaining their fire hydrants. He said this expense should not go back to the taxpayers.

Review of Utility Operational Reports

Walker said these are the utility operational reports that are required by the existing utility ordinance. He said there is no enforcement if the utilities do not provide these reports. Walker said typically most of the operational reports are submitted to the county. He said the 2005 reports have been received and the 2006 reports will be due after the first of the year. Walker said the county uses these reports to make amendments to the five year plan regarding permitted capacity. He said the Florida Department of Environmental Protection actually regulates the utilities.

Handler asked if the reports are checked for accuracy. Walker said the reports are checked against the prior year's report for consistency. There was discussion regarding capacity and expansion requirements of the utility companies.

Dotson updated the Utility Board on the Jubilee Project, the planned expansion of the wastewater plant and water line expansions. There was discussion regarding the areas currently provided with reuse water and planned reuse water expansions. Dotson also discussed the number of water connections, wastewater connections, and capacities of the water system and wastewater plant. He reviewed commercial developments, apartment complexes, and townhomes under construction in the Pace area.

Walker said at the next meeting he will provide franchise areas maps to reacquaint the members with the franchise areas.

Other Business/Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting of the Utility Board will be on Monday, November 27, 2006 at 5:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Utility Board at this time, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.